

CONFIDENTIAL

FEB 1952

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

CLASSIFICATION

~~SECRET/CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ONLY~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

50X1-HUM

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT

CD NO.

50X1-HUM

COUNTRY USSR (Estonian SSR)

DATE DISTR. 8 Aug. 1952

SUBJECT Living Conditions in Estonia

NO. OF PAGES 4

DATE OF INFO.

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

PLACE ACQUIRED

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

50X1-HUM

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES, WITHIN THE MEANING OF TITLE 18, SECTIONS 793 AND 794, OF THE U.S. CODE, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS TO OR RECEIPT BY AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. THE REPRODUCTION OF THIS FORM IS PROHIBITED.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

50X1-HUM

Restaurants and Bars

1. Estonians usually visit public bars, where the prices are lower than in restaurants and one can have a drink standing up and then go away, but they prefer to drink at home rather than in restaurants because it is safer. One must always be cautious in public places. Cases are known where people have been taken away from restaurants or public bars on account of their talk; and, as some people are unable to guard their speech when intoxicated, the results may be dangerous. Furthermore, visiting restaurants attracts attention to the income of the visitor.

2. The largest restaurants in Tallinn, the Gloria (now in Muurivahe street), the Iaine (former Marcelle), and the Kuning (at the corner of Vene and Viru streets), are always full on Saturday and Sunday evenings. The majority of visitors are Russians.

Shops

3. During the last couple of years, the amount of goods in the shops in Estonia has increased considerably, but that does not mean, however, that there is enough of everything. In Tallinn, for example, if one wishes to buy underwear, one may have to go to many shops before finding the suitable size, and there is no choice of quality, which is all more or less the same. When buying socks or shoes, one must also make sure that both are the same size, as it often happens that they are not properly paired and one sock or shoe may be shorter than the other. At certain periods some items are simply unobtainable. Adults and children's felt boots and winter gloves, for instance, must be bought during the summer, as they are not available in winter, while rubberized raincoats are not to be found on sale anywhere in

50X1-HUM

CLASSIFICATION

~~SECRET/CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ONLY~~

STATE	X	NAVY	X	NSRB
ARMY	X	AIR	X	FBI

CONFIDENTIAL

Document No.

No Change in Class.

☐ Declassified

Class. Changed To: TS S

Auth: HR 70-2

SECRET/CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ONLY

50X1-HUM

- 2 -

the spring and must be bought during the winter. Very small quantities of women's light street shoes, so-called tennis shoes, come on sale in spring and autumn, and then there is much pushing and scuffling with the Russian women in the lines. There is an acute shortage of better quality dress materials, so that when a small consignment of cloth from Germany or Czechoslovakia comes on sale it is practically mobbed.

4. The quality of goods is generally poor; they are tasteless in appearance and have no durability. Among the things which can be described as completely useless are all kinds of locks and padlocks, as they can easily be opened with a bit of wire. The choice of children's toys is very small; they are badly made and sometimes very ugly, but prices are high. For instance, a Teddy-bear about 50 cm in height costs up to 150 rs, and the simplest little wooden or wicker toy baby carriage costs 45 rs.
5. The distribution of goods to the shops is haphazard and not systematic. It can happen that an article is not on sale or is in very short supply, and at the same time there may be a warehouse completely full of such articles, and nobody knows how to put them into circulation. Such items are published occasionally in the press with loud criticism, and endeavors are made to discover who is responsible for the scandal. The culprit frequently remains undetected, however, since the fault lies with the whole system.
6. In Haapsalu (58-56 N, 23-32 E) most of the salespeople in the shops are Russians, who speak no Estonian. As the country people from that neighborhood speak no Russian, this causes a great deal of trouble on both sides and arouses resentment among the Estonians. Many Russians have, in fact, found their way into the commercial field in Estonia. They are especially skilled in making "extra earnings". These "extra earnings" come from swindling the customer over weights, a custom which is widely practiced, and also from speculations with sugar. One of the most remunerative jobs for women is working in a grocery, where the wages are small - up to 300 rs per month - but where the chances of "extra earnings" are considered to be very satisfactory.

Standard of Living

7. The following are a few examples of wages and salaries. They are subject to deductions for income tax, childless tax, etc. The taxes amount to 10-15 percent of earnings. In addition, every earner is obliged to subscribe "voluntarily" to State Loans an amount equal to one month's pay, towards which a deduction is made from his pay over a period of 10 months. Wages are paid out twice per month, but often there are long delays with the excuse that there is not enough money in the bank, or that the bank has not received the requisite cash on time.

Rubles per month

Workers of various categories	
average	400 - 600
Typists	300 - 400
Employees, medium (sic)	400 - 500
Doctors	600 - 800
Assistant surgeons, nurses	300 - 450

8. Party functionaries, ministers, senior officials, and the like draw much higher pay, and it is believed that especially high pay is drawn by active and associate members of the Academy of Sciences and by the rectors and professors of the Tartu University and the Tallinn Polytechnic Institute. The high pay enables them to eat and dress very well, so that they present a marked contrast to other people. Ordinary people have learned to manage to make ends meet. On account of the situation, there are frequent occurrences of thefts from warehouses and factories and speculation of every kind. Many people also do work at home at handicraft of all kinds, without the knowledge of the finance authorities. All such private work, incidentally, is prohibited and subject to severe fines.

SECRET/CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ONLY

SECRET/CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ONLY

50X1-HUM

- 3 -

Prices

9. The following are a few examples of prices obtaining in Estonia:

	<u>Rubles</u>
Butter, per kg (not always obtainable)	35 - 40
Margarine, per kg.	25
Milk, in winter (long lines), per liter, up to	4
Cheese, average, per kg.	30
Rye bread, per kg. (almost always poor quality, underbaked, often long lines)	1.80 - 2.00
White bread, according to size, per loaf (always lines except in cafes, where prices are higher)	0.50 - 1.50
Pork, according to type, per kg, up to (prices vary, not always obtainable)	35
Sausages, according to type, per kg	10 - 60
Sugar, per kg (Only 0.5 kg of sugar is sold at a time. It is not always obtainable, and supplies come in small quanti- ties, so that sugar lines are always long, sometimes up to 300 persons.)	12
Pastries (confectioners'), each	1.50
Sweets, per kg	12 - 50
Spirits (alcohol), per $\frac{1}{2}$ liter	25
Cigarettes and Papirosy (with mouthpiece) per package	0.60 - 8.00
Beer, per liter	4.30 - 6.00
Note: Sweets, little cakes, chocolate, spirits, beer, cigarettes and Papirosy, toilet soap, cologne, and perfumes are always obtain- able.	
Man's suit, medium quality	1000 - 1200
Shoes, black rubber soles, per pair (leather-soled shoes are more expensive, but quite unserviceable in the rain)	100 - 130
Shoes, leather, crepe-soled, imported from Czechoslovakia, per pair	250 - 450

SECRET/CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ONLY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~~~SECRET/CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ONLY~~

- 4 -

	<u>Rubles</u>
Man's overcoat, spring/autumn weight, medium quality	700 - 800
Raincoat (processed material)	700 - 800
Raincoat (rubberized)	200
Man's underwear (vest and pants), per set	70
Man's shirt, each	100 - 130
Man's hat, up to	150
Bicycle	800
Motorcycle (BMW), 350 cc.	4000
Car, Moskvich	9000
Radio (fairly good quality receiving set)	700 - 1000

~~SECRET/CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ONLY~~~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT

CD NO.

DATE DISTR. 8 Aug. 1952

NO. OF PAGES 4

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION 50X1-HUM

SECRET/CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ON

STATE	X	NAVY	X	NSRB	CONTINENTAL	CLASS. CONTROL	EX	TO	2
ARMY	X	AIR	X	FBI					

Document No. 11
 The Change in Class. ☐
☐ Declassified
 Class. Character To: 10-2 ☒
 Auth.: 100-702
 Date: 110978